

Ote Makura Reserve

a combined approach

by Mike Clare

"I know a lot of people think this is a strange thing for a farmer to do — I think they have strange ideas about farmers. If I didn't love the land and appreciate the birds and the bush I wouldn't be here."



The Ote Makura Reserve begins as coastal broadleaf and ends with high altitude mountain beech and patches of tussock on the tops. It will be a valuable addition to the few areas of bush protected on the South Island's east coast.

Photo: Annette Dew, Christchurch Press

Kaikoura farmer, Bill Dowle, has no reason to be apologetic about the fact that he has recently reserved 614 ha of bush along the Ote Makura stream, 18 km south of Kaikoura. He is aware that on soil and water conservation grounds alone, the bush is worth saving; in addition, though, as one of a handful of forested areas remaining on the South Island's east coast, Ote Makura is a vital home to bellbirds, tuis, fantails, pigeons, falcons, brown creepers and the South Island bush robin.

Without the help of hundreds of Forest

and Bird members, Ote Makura might never have been protected. When an appeal went out to some Forest and Bird branches earlier this year for \$16,000 to fence part of the area — no money was paid to buy Ote Makura — the donations quickly mounted up. Today Ote Makura's chequered history is behind it and a reserve is the happy outcome.

Hidden gullies

A rugged coast, violent seas, rocky vegetation-clad cliffs and magnificent snowcov-

ered mountains are the impressions of Kaikoura that the passing public gain.

Yet behind this spectacular coastline lie impressive bush-clad gullies hidden from view. While most of the coastal escarpment is scenic reserve, until recently these gullies have not been afforded the same degree of protection.

Now the Ote Makura block, combined with the original Goose Bay — Omihi Scenic Reserve forms one of the largest reserves in southern Marlborough (1043 ha). Moves to acquire this catchment and ad-